

Department of State - Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs

Program Office:	Office of Press and Public Diplomacy, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs
Funding Opportunity Title:	Track II People-to-People Activities in South and Central Asia
Announcement Type:	Cooperative Agreement
Funding Opportunity Number:	SCAPPD-12-AW-150-SCA-07022012
Deadline for Applications:	July 31, 2012
CFDA	19.040

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

The Office of Press and Public Diplomacy of the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs of the U.S. Department of State in Washington, DC announces an open competition for a cooperative agreement to conduct people-to-people activities between any combination of two or more South and Central Asian nations of the following countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, or Uzbekistan. Proposed projects should advance Secretary Clinton's vision of a stable and prosperous South and Central Asia, with Afghanistan at its heart, linked by a New Silk Road of transit, trade, and ideas.

Proposals should support the U.S. government's broad engagement in South and Central Asia. Examples of the U.S. government's long-term commitment in this region include the following sectors: commercial, higher education, architectural and cultural preservation, women's empowerment, fine arts (visual and performing), and cross-border problem-solving. Program themes identified as priorities include: economic integration and trade facilitation; higher education capacity and partnership building; architectural and cultural preservation; women's empowerment; youth engagement; fine arts (visual and performing), and cross-border problem-solving (energy, food security, water, environment, and narcotics trafficking).

Because nearly half of the two billion people who reside in the South and Central Asia are below age 26, the most competitive proposals will concentrate outreach programs on youth and increase understanding of U.S. culture and institutions. Complementing the theme of regional integration is an emphasis on exchange and visitors programs – traditional and virtual – that bring citizens from throughout the region together with one another and with U.S. citizens.

Overall authority for this cooperative program is contained in the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, Public Law 87-256, as amended, also known as the Fulbright-Hays Act. The purpose of the Act is “to enable the Government of the United States to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries...; to strengthen the ties which unite us with other nations by demonstrating the educational and cultural interests, developments, and achievements of the people of the United States and other nations... and thus to assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic and peaceful relations between the United States and other countries of the world.” The funding authority for the program above is provided through legislation.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Contact Ellen Delage in the Office of Press and Public Diplomacy, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs (SCA/PPD), U.S. Department of State, 2201 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20520, telephone: 202-647-9503, email: DelageEM@state.gov. Please refer to the Funding Opportunity Number SCAPPD-12-AW-150-SCA-07022012 located at the top of this announcement when making your request.

CONTACT INFORMATION

- A) For questions relating to Grants.gov, please call the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726.
- B) To request a hard copy of the Solicitation Package (the full electronic package is available on Grants.gov), or for assistance with the requirements of this solicitation, contact Ellen Delage in the Office of Press and Public Diplomacy, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs (SCA/PPD), U.S. Department of State, 2201 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20520, telephone: 202-647-9503, email: DelageEM@state.gov. Please refer to the Funding Opportunity Number SCAPPD-12-AW-150-SCA-07022012 located at the top of this announcement when making your request.

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This competition is designed to use people-to-people activities to advance Secretary Clinton's vision of a stable and prosperous South and Central Asia region linked by a New Silk Road of transit, trade, and ideas.

The Office of Press and Public Diplomacy of the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs of the U.S. Department of State in Washington, DC announces an open competition for a cooperative agreement to establish people-to-people activities between any combination of two or more South and Central Asian nations of the following countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, or Uzbekistan.

Eligible organizations include accredited, public and private U.S. four-year colleges and universities meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3); U.S. non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3); U.S. commercial firms; legally registered foreign colleges, universities, or other educational institutions; legally registered foreign non-profit organizations; foreign commercial firms; and public international institutions.

Program themes identified as priorities include: economic integration and trade facilitation; higher education capacity and partnership building; architectural and cultural preservation; women's empowerment; youth engagement; fine arts (visual and performing), and cross-border problem-solving (energy, food security, water, environment, and narcotics trafficking).

Objectives detailed as priorities include people-to-people interaction in two or more target countries, promoting stability and prosperity in South and Central Asia; focused engagement with youth and civil society; and development and implementation of traditional or virtual exchange programs. The desired outcome of the program is positive and productive interaction among the people of South and Central Asia, which will foster the type of people-to-people ties that will promote a stable, prosperous, and integrated region.

Programming in support of these themes and the means of achieving this outcome are purposefully left broad to encourage the submission of innovative proposals tailored to strengths of the applicant organization. However, we encourage the creative use of technology, for example, to allow for long-distance teaching via the internet/DVC or exposure to U.S. audiences without traveling outside the region.

The timeframe for achieving the objectives must be clearly outlined in the proposal funding request. The maximum project performance period should be no more than 3 years.

Administration

The U.S. Government, through the Office of Press and Public Diplomacy of the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs of the U.S. Department of State in Washington, DC, is providing resources to promote increased, long-term people-to-people ties through a wide range of public diplomacy programs.

A conference call will be scheduled while the RFP is open so that interested parties can consult with staff at the U.S. Department of State. All consultations must be an open forum so that all applicants will hear the same questions and answers and have access to the same information in preparing their proposals. See page 13 below for details.

U.S. Department of State will not provide assistance to identify partner organizations.

II. BACKGROUND

The Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs (SCA) aims to foster an integrated, cooperative region that reinforces peace and prosperity. To that end, SCA supports economic, transit, infrastructure, and human links between the countries of South and Central Asia.

The U.S. Department of State works to sustain and strengthen democratic institutions, reinforce peace and economic growth, and support universal human rights.

In order to fortify efforts to generate region-wide linkages, U.S. Department of State seeks to enhance cooperation with multilateral partners, regional organizations and country coalitions to address cross-border challenges, from narcotics flows and terrorism threats to trans-boundary water management and disaster preparedness. U.S. Department of State complements the region's educational systems through innovative pilot programs that provide adults, university students and school-age children, often specifically women and girls, with tools to succeed in a competitive global economy.

Because nearly half of the two billion people who reside in the region are below age 26, the U.S. Department of State concentrates outreach programs on youth and

promoting positive views of the United States, through the use of social media and other new technology. Complementing integration efforts, the U.S. Department of State emphasizes traditional and virtual exchange and visitor programs that bring citizens from throughout the region and the United States together.

Project Objectives

The purpose of this program is to employ people-to-people activities to advance Secretary Clinton's vision of a stable and prosperous South and Central Asia in any combination of two or more of the following countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, or Uzbekistan.

Program themes identified as priorities include: economic integration and trade facilitation; higher education capacity and partnership building; architectural and cultural preservation; women's empowerment; youth engagement; fine arts (visual and performing), and cross-border problem-solving (energy, food security, water, environment, and narcotics trafficking). Other program themes are acceptable and will be considered for funding.

Program activities may include, but are not limited to: traditional or virtual exchange programs; long-distance teaching via internet/DVC; exposure to U.S. audiences, use of technology; faculty/student exchanges, joint curriculum development, joint research project, and online courses; museum/theater management training/internships; conferences and camps; and other professional development activities.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to propose other project activities not specifically mentioned in this solicitation so long as they reinforce the project objectives.

If the proposed program includes exchanges, the organization must allow adequate time for visa process. U.S. visas are not guaranteed for the purposes of this program.

Projects focusing primarily on physical infrastructure development are not eligible for consideration under this competition.

Monitoring & Evaluation

Organizations receiving this award are expected to submit at minimum quarterly reports on the results of program activities. The Bureau strongly encourages

recipient organizations to keep Department of State staff engaged on progress with informal, formal, and in-person communications. Proposals should describe and budget for a methodology for project monitoring and evaluation. The monitoring and evaluation plan should include an assessment of the current status of the participating organization and, if applicable, partner organizations needs at the time of program inception (with specific reference to project objectives); formative evaluation to allow for mid-course revisions in the implementation strategy; and, at the conclusion of the project, summative evaluation of the degree to which the project's objectives have been achieved. The final evaluation should include indicators of the project's influence on the participating institutions and their surrounding communities or societies. The final evaluation should also include recommendations about how to build upon project achievements. **Evaluative observations by external consultants with appropriate subject and regional expertise are especially encouraged.** Evaluators employed by the applicant organization, but not assigned to this specific project's execution, are acceptable.

This monitoring and evaluation plan must include:

- 1) how baseline data from either primary or secondary sources will be collected;
- 2) clear, defined, objectively verifiable performance indicators to be used to track and predict progress towards achievement of project objectives and results;
- 3) the sources, methods (quantitative and qualitative), and timeline for data collection;
- 4) the team or individuals responsible for ensuring data are available on schedule;
- 5) how the performance data will be analyzed;
- 6) how the performance data will be reported, reviewed, and used to inform decisions; and
- 7) a monitoring and evaluation budget aligned to support the previous requirements.

Knowledge of working conditions in the selected countries can be important for a successful proposal and project. Organizations that do not have experience in the selected countries are encouraged to discuss or partner with organizations that have experience in all selected countries.

Institutional Commitment

Proposals must include letters of commitment from all organizational partners including the organization submitting the proposal. Each letter must

be signed by an official who is authorized to commit institutional resources to the project.

Costs

The commitment of all partner institutions to the proposed project should be reflected through cost-sharing, which they offer in the context of their respective institutional capacities. Although the contributions offered by institutions with relatively few resources may be less than those offered by applicants with greater resources, all participating institutions should identify appropriate contributions. U.S. institutions are strongly encouraged to contribute to the international travel expenses for U.S. participants as part of their institutional cost-share. Proposed cost-sharing will be considered an important indicator of the applicant institution's interest in the project and potential to benefit from it.

Funds awarded may be used to assist with the costs of administrative salaries, and other direct administrative costs as well as limited indirect costs. If the award is made to a single organization with sub-grantees, adequate provision for oversight of expenditures, including indirect costs with sub-grantees must be included.

Scope of Award

The U.S. Department of State, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, Office of Press and Public Diplomacy and the award recipient would agree to participate jointly in the development and implementation of this project. Each party would have specific obligations and responsibilities under the terms of the Cooperative Agreement. These obligations and responsibilities are outlined below:

The recipient shall provide the following support:

- Design and implement the program.
- Provide all work plans and schedules to the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, Office of Press and Public Diplomacy for approval.
- Provide copies of printed materials developed to the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, Office of Press and Public Diplomacy.
- If applicable, provide names and resumes of all Afghanistan and Pakistan travelers to the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, Office of Press and Public Diplomacy for approval.
- If applicable, manage all funds granted including those used by sub-grantees.

- Provide programmatic and administrative oversight of the overall program and participants.
- If applicable, coordinate logistical arrangements for all program travelers such as obtaining necessary visas, pre-departure information, airport pick-up and drop-off, lodging and meals, health insurance and medical treatment and the disbursement of program funds.
- If applicable, provide health insurance for all travelers visiting the U.S. under this program. For travelers from Afghanistan and Pakistan, provide certification of health insurance for each traveler four to six months before travel date so that the certification is available for the pre-visa interview documentation process.
- Ensure that all documentation is prepared and that appointments are made so that the visa interviews take place well before expected travel date. Note U.S. visas for citizens of Afghanistan and Pakistan may require four to six months.
- Assemble quarterly and final, programmatic and financial reports; submit one single report to the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, Office of Press and Public Diplomacy.
- Maintain regular contact with the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, Office of Press and Public Diplomacy about overall program administration. Keep the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, Office of Press and Public Diplomacy fully and currently informed about how the program and operations are administered, any problems or deficiencies, and the necessity for, and progress of, corrective action.
- Monitor activities and resolve problems in carrying out administrative and program responsibilities, in coordination with the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, Office of Press and Public Diplomacy.

The Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, Office of Press and Public Diplomacy shall provide the following support:

- Approve all work plans and schedules.
- Approve all Afghanistan and Pakistan travelers to the United States.
- Coordinate issuance of DS -2019 forms with the State Department in Washington, D.C.
- Monitor and evaluate the program, including site visits.
- Suggest program changes when necessary.

III. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- Eligibility for U.S. institutions is limited to accredited U.S. four-year colleges and universities meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3); U.S. non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3); and U.S. commercial firms;
- Eligibility for foreign institutions is limited to legally registered foreign non-profit organizations; foreign commercial firms; legally registered foreign colleges, universities, or other educational institutions; and public international institutions.

The Department encourages organizations that have not previously received international program funding from the U.S. Government to apply under this announcement.

IV. AWARD INFORMATION

Type of Award: Cooperative Agreement

Fiscal Year Funds: 2012

Approximate Total Funding: \$1,000,000 pending availability of funds. The Federal share of individual requests may not exceed \$400,000.

Approximate Number of Awards: 4 @ \$250,000.

Anticipated Award Date: Pending availability of funds, 1 September 2012.

Maximum project performance period should be no more than 3 years.

APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Application Submission Process:

Pre-application teleconferences will be offered prior to the closing date for this announcement. The purpose of the pre-application teleconference is to review the program announcement and discuss the project with the Department of State, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, Office of Press and Public Diplomacy before submitting a proposal.

Application Deadline: All applications must be submitted on or before July 31, 2012, 17.00 p.m.

Application Content: Applicants must follow the RFP instructions and conditions contained herein and supply all information required. **Failure to furnish all information or comply with stated requirements will result in**

disqualification from the competition. Applicants must set forth full, accurate, and complete information as required by this RFP. The penalty for making false statements in proposals to the USG is prescribed on 18 U.S.C.1001.

The complete proposal package must consist of the following:

1 - Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424):

This form can be found on-line at:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/forms.html>.

2 – Proposal Narrative

The proposal may not exceed 12 double-spaced pages in 12-point, Times New Roman font with 1-inch margins. This requirement excludes the allowable appendices, which are identified in Section 3 below.

a) Abstract:

The abstract is limited to 300 words in length. It must provide a summary of the identified need, proposed activities, and expected results.

b) Problem Statement:

The problem statement must describe the need for the project, with regards to: location, local resources, and regional educational challenges.

c) Project Goals/Implementation Plan:

The applicant must specify the goals and objectives of the project, relative to the problem statement. The proposed activities should be described in sufficient detail to show how objectives and goals will be met. This section should include the target audience, estimated number of direct beneficiaries; This section should also describe how success will be measured via performance indicators. Finally, this section must include a time-task plan that clearly identifies the objectives and major activities.

d) Organizational Capability:

Applications must include a clear description of the applicant's management structure, and organizational experience and background in the target countries as these relate to the proposed activities. The description should include information on the logistical strengths of the organization in the target countries, i.e. offices, vehicles, infrastructure, security, etc. Besides information about the organization as a whole, this section must also identify the proposed management structure and staffing plan for the proposed

project. If programming is proposed in Afghanistan or Pakistan, the proposal should include a statement on how security would be provided for recipient personnel. While the award recipient is responsible for providing their own security, related expenses may be included in the proposal budget.

3 - Appendices:

The application submission must include the following five appendices. Only the appendices listed below may be included as part of the application:

- (a) **Budget** – the budget must identify the total amount of funding requested, with a breakdown of amounts to be spent in the following budget categories: personnel; travel; equipment; supplies; consultants/contracts; other direct costs; and indirect costs. The budget may not exceed 1 page in length, and may include an estimated cost for continuation activities, which will be considered for successful applicants to this RFP in future fiscal years based on performance and the availability of funds.
- (b) **Project Timeframe** – the project timeframe must include a start date, end date and a breakdown of various stages of the project. The better detailed the milestones and target dates, the better the review committee can visualize the project.
- (c) **Resumes** – a resume, not to exceed 1 page in length, must be included for the proposed key staff persons, such as the Project Director and any other staff in the decision-making positions.
- (d) **Letters of Commitment** – proposals must include letters of commitment from all institutional partners, including the institution submitting the proposal, which will serve as the funding recipient with responsibility for project coordination. Each letter must be signed by an official who is authorized to commit institutional resources to the project. Letters of commitment should be included for those organizations that will play an active role in the project, including those that receive financial support through the project budget, and should define the roles and responsibilities of each partner in relation to the proposed project activities, and the expected result of the partnership. The individual letters cannot exceed 1 page in length, and applicants are limited to submitting up to 5 letters per application.
- (e) **Monitoring & Evaluation Plan** – The monitoring and evaluation plan should meet all the criteria detailed on pp. 7-8.

V. AWARD SELECTION CRITERIA

Applicants should note that the following criteria (1) serve as a standard against which all proposals will be evaluated, and (2) serve to identify the significant matters that should be addressed in all proposals. The USG will award funding to the applicants whose offers represent the best value to the USG on the basis of technical merit and cost.

Each application will be evaluated by a peer review committee of Department of State and other experts, as deemed appropriate. The evaluation criteria have been tailored to the requirements of this RFP.

- **Problem Statement (25 points):** This section should identify the importance and relevance of the applicant's proposal to the broader U.S. Public Diplomacy policy objectives as well as relevance to the program objectives of the Department of State as described under the first two Sections of this solicitation. A compelling statement that shows an in-depth understanding of U.S. foreign policy priorities and relevance of the project in the target countries will be given great consideration by the review panel.
- **Implementation Plan (40 points):** Applicants should describe what they propose to do and how they will do it. The proposed activities must directly relate to meeting the goals and objectives, and applicants should include information on how they will measure activities' effectiveness. The review panel will be viewing the implementation plan in terms of how well it addresses the problem statement, relevance of the goals and objectives, feasibility of the proposed activities and their timeline for completion, and the extent to which the impact of the project will continue beyond the conclusion of the funding period. Proposals linking South Asia and Central Asia are encouraged.
- **Organizational Capability (20 points):** Applicants must demonstrate how their resources, capabilities and experience will enable them to achieve the stated goals and objectives. In addition, applicants should describe how and with whom they will collaborate to meet project goals. The application must distinguish all key partners and organizations that will be involved in the project. The application should also thoroughly outline any experience in Pakistan on the part of the U.S. institution; such experience will greatly strengthen an application.

- **Appendices (15 points):**

- **Budget:** Costs shall be evaluated for realism, control practices and efficiency. The Department of State must determine that the costs paid for this award are reasonable, allowable and allocable to the proposed project activities. This will consist of a review of the Budget to determine if the overall costs are realistic for the work to be performed, if the costs reflect the applicant's understanding of the allowable cost principles established by OMB Circular A-122, and if the costs are consistent with the program narrative.
- **Resume:** The review panel will consider the appropriateness of the selected project director; in view of the role and responsibility that person will play in guiding the project through implementation to completion. Position descriptions submitted in lieu of the resume will be reviewed for the appropriateness of the qualifications and skills identified.
- **Letters of Intent:** The review panel will consider the types and depth of relationships that the applicant has with local organizations. The panel will also review the letters to determine the willingness of local organizations to participate in the effort, and that all parties have an understanding of their unique roles and responsibilities in terms of the proposed project.
- **Monitoring & Evaluation Plan:** The review panel will consider all the elements of the plan (the data collection, the performance indicators, the timeline, the implementers, the analysis, the application and use of the evaluation results) to determine if the plan appears to be fully integrated into the project and likely to produce accurate and useful results.

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

Award Notices: The cooperative agreement shall be written, signed, awarded, and administered by the Grants Officer. The Grants Officer is the USG official delegated the authority by the U.S. Department of State Procurement Executive to write, award and administer grants and cooperative agreements. The assistance award agreement is the authorizing document and it will be provided to the Recipient through either U.S. mail, e-mail or facsimile transmission. Organizations whose applications will not be funded will also be notified in writing.

Applicants should be aware that there will be a delay between the time that full applications are submitted and awards are made. Successful applicants can expect to receive their funding 2 - 4 months after the application is approved.

Issuance of this RFP does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the USG, nor does it commit the USG to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals. Further, the USG reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received.

- **Reporting Requirements:** Grantees are required to submit quarterly program progress and financial reports throughout the project period. Progress and financial reports are due 30 days after the reporting period. Final programmatic and financial reports are due 90 days after the close of the project period. Progress reports at a minimum should be submitted via electronic mail to an address to be provided in the award.

VII. DISCLAIMER

If a proposal is selected for funding, the Department of State has no obligation to provide any additional future funding in connection with the award. Renewal of an award to increase funding or extend the period of performance is at the total discretion of the Department of State.